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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents execute search, arrest warrants in Hayward in forced-labor, human-trafficking probe

HAYWARD, Calif., Aug. 30, 2017—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents executed search and arrest warrants at multiple locations in Hayward yesterday in connection with an ongoing forced-labor and human-trafficking investigation.

More than a dozen immigrant workers were freed from a home and an industrial building where they were being held in squalid conditions without running water and forced to work on construction projects without pay elsewhere in the Bay Area, according to information provided to Hayward police.

Victim-witness support personnel were on-hand to offer help and to connect those who were freed to nonprofit service organizations, if they chose to accept help. Otherwise, the workers who were rescued were free to go.

“We are grateful to Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents for providing timely information in advance and following the operation,” Hayward Police Chief Mark Koller said. “This kind of communication is vital to the ability of our police department to protect the public while maintaining the trust and cooperation of our community.”

The execution of the search and arrest was led and carried out by the Homeland Security Investigations division of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which focuses exclusively on serious criminal activity rather than immigration law enforcement.

No additional information about the investigation is being provided by HPD and the City of Hayward as the investigation is ongoing.